

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

EUR-12 EB-07 TRSE-00 AID-05 /078 W

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FM AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4007

INFO USINFO WASHDC

HQ USSOUTHCOM SCJ2

AMEMBASSY ASUNCION

AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

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USINFO FOR IOP/M, ILA

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PINT, UY

SUBJ: REACTIONS TO MENDEZ' SPEECH

REF: MONTEVIDEO 2005 (DTG 241355Z MAY 77)

1. SUMMARY. PRESIDENT MENDEZ' MAY 21 SPEECH, ACCORDING TO HIGH LEVEL GOU SOURCES, WAS INTENDED TO INFORM THE URUGUAYAN PUBLIC THAT NO CHANGES IN POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT WERE TO BE EXPECTED IN THE NEAR FUTURE AND TO PUT TO REST SPECULATION ON ANY IMMINENT POLITICAL OPENING. WHILE ACCOMPLISHING THAT GOAL, THE SPEECH ALSO RESULTED IN MEDIA AND PUBLIC CRITICISM OF THE CIVILIAN-MILITARY REGIME'S POLITICAL POLICY. END SUMMARY.

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2. EL PAIS AND EL DIA, URUGUAY'S INFLUENTIAL, WIDELY READ DAILIES, HAVE SEVERELY CRITICIZED PRESIDENT MENDEZ' MAY 21 SPEECH AND SOME POLITICAL CONCEPTS HE SUPPORTED. EL PAIS, USUALLY PRO-GOVERNMENT, SAID IN AN EDITORIAL MAY 27 ENTITLED "NEITHER ANNOUNCEMENTS NOR ANYTHING OF IMPORTANCE" THAT THE GOU BUILD-UP OF THE SPEECH HAD "DEFRAUDED WELL-FOUNDED POPULAR ILLUSIONS RELATING TO THE RESTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC TO

FULL INSTITUTIONAL DEMOCRACY". EL PAIS ALSO NOTED IN ITS LONG EDITORIAL THAT NINE-TENTHS OF THE SPEECH WAS REPETITIOUS AND ASKED RHETORICALLY WHAT OTHER CONCLUSION COULD BE REACHED BUT THAT "RETURN TO INSTITUTIONAL REGULARITY CONTINUES AND WILL CONTINUE FOR AN INDETERMINENT TIME AT POINT ZERO". THE EDITORIAL WAS REPRINTED IN THE OPPOSITION DAILY, EL DIA. EL PAIS, HOWEVER, SOON FOLLOWED WITH A CONSIDERABLY LESS HARSH EDITORIAL EXPLAINING THAT ITS CRITICISM HAD TO BE READ IN THE LIGHT OF ITS OFT-STATED OPINION THAT THERE IS A NEED TO REVITALIZE URUGUAYAN DEMOCRACY, WITHOUT RETURNING TO THE CHAOS OF PREVIOUS YEARS. EL PAIS' EXPLANATION WAS APPARENTLY MOTIVATED IN PART BY GOU ADMONISHMENTS TO THE GENERALLY PRO-GOVERNMENT EDITORS.

3. LESS SURPRISING WAS THE IMMEDIATE REACTION OF EL DIA WHICH HAS SO FAR DEVOTED SEVEN LENGTHY EDITORIALS TO THE SPEECH. NOTING THAT DR. MENDEZ SAID THE GOU WILL ACCEPT CRITICISM, EL DIA PROMISED PLENTY. ONE EL DIA EDITORIAL, FOR EXAMPLE, DISPUTED THE THESIS THAT DEMOCRATIC FREEDOMS WOULD HAVE TO AWAIT THE ECONOMIC/SOCIAL RECUPERATION OF THE NATION, AND ADDED THAT THE SOVIET UNION AND CUBA HAVE THE SAME PHILOSOPHY, WITH THE FORMER STILL WAITING AFTER 70 YEARS FOR FREEDOM.

4. THE PUBLIC, AS FAR AS CAN BE DETERMINE, WAS IN FACT DISAPPOINTED IN NOT BEING TOLD OF SOME INNOVATION IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS AND PUZZLED OVER THE WAY IN WHICH THIS WHOLE AFFAIR WAS HANDLED. AFTER THE SPEECH, RUMORS CIRCULATED WIDELY THAT POLITICAL CHANGES WERE TO HAVE BEEN ANNOUNCED BUT WERE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SQUELCHED BY UNIDENTIFIED CONSERVATIVE FORCES IN THE CIVILIAN-MILITARY HIERARCHY. THOSE RUMORS, HOWEVER, HAVE NOT BEEN CONFIRMED BY ANY SOLID EVIDENCE.

5. USIS SOURCES REPORT THAT MENDEZ WILL HOLD ANOTHER "PRESS CONFERENCE" JUNE 13 INTENDED TO CLEAR UP SOME POINTS MADE IN THE MAY 21 SPEECH. THIS REPORTEDLY WILL BE FOLLOWED A WEEK LATER BY A PRESS CONFERENCE OF MILITARY LEADERS.

6. IN THE MEANTIME AT RETIREMENT CEREMONIES FOR GEN. EDUARDO ZUBIA, ARMY CINC VADORA PLEDGED A CONTINUATION OF THE ECONOMIC/SOCIAL POLICIES OF THE GOVERNMENT, AND ZUBIA SUPPORTED THE MENDEZ SPEECH, AND THE NEED TO COOL POLITICAL PASSIONS. HE CRITICIZED THE PRESS FOR OBSTRUCTION THIS WITH THEIR EDITORIAL CRITICISM. BOTH SUPPORTED THE PHILOSOPHY THAT ECONOMIC/SOCIAL RECUPERATION TAKES PRIORITY OVER POLITICAL DEMOCRACY.

7. EMBOFFS HAVE BEEN TOLD PRIVATELY BY HIGH LEVEL GOU

MILITARY AND CIVILIAN OFFICIALS THAT THE SPEECH WAS INTENDED TO DAMPEN SPECULATION THAT POLITICAL CHANGES WERE IN THE OFFING. THUS, ONCE AGAIN, IT WOULD APPEAR, WISHFUL THINKING ON THE PART OF SOME SECTORS OF THE NORMALLY POLITICALLY ACTIVE POLULATION OF URUGUAY LED SOME TO THE ERRONEOUS CONCLUSION THAT THE GOU, OR MORE SPECIFICALLY THE MILITARY, WAS ABOUT TO REVERSE PREVIOUS POLICY ANNOUNCEMENTS AND BEGIN A NEW PHASE IN THE POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE NATION. AND ONCE AGAIN THE COUNTRY WAS INFORMED THAT POLITICAL ACTIVITY AS PREVIOUSLY PRACTICED IN URUGUAY WILL NOT BE RESUMED IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

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